

FACT #3

Big corporate agribusiness actually opposes U.S. farm policy. U.S. farm policy does help all American farm families because all farm families feel the sting of a world market that is not free or fair.

Critics of U.S. farm policy complain that benefits are going to "big" farmers instead of "small" farmers but what they don't say is that most anyone who farms enough to be a full-time farmer is a "big" farmer in their book.

Critics of U.S. farm policy use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's definition of a "farmer," which is anyone who produces a crop valued at \$1,000 or more (the equivalent of a 4-acre corn farm), so the percentage of farm families who are trying to make most or all of their living off the land is going to be small compared to the overall number of "farmers." In other words, most anyone who farms enough to be a full-time farmer is a "big" farmer by comparison.

While 38% of these farm families receive 87% of the benefits, these farm families:

- produce 92% of America's food and fiber.
- make most, if not all, of their living off the land.
- operate the equivalent of a 372-acre corn farm or larger – about the average sized Minnesota farm.

While 62% of these farms, known as "rural residence farms," receive 13% of the benefits:

- these farms produce 8% of America's food and fiber.
- many of their owners have little dependence, if any, on the farm for income.
- often the owners see their farms as a way to enjoy rural living rather than as a means to making a living.

While both groups of farmers are important to rural America, each plays a unique role in production agriculture with different levels of risk and different expectations of help.

U.S. farm policy helps all farm families according to their risk, ensuring that the right amount of help is there when help is needed most.

"The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything he buys at retail, sells everything he sells at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways."

-President John F. Kennedy



"Our farmers deserve praise, not condemnation; and their efficiency should be cause for gratitude, not something for which they are penalized."

-President John F. Kennedy